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ABSTRACT

In Latin America, the number of poor increased in the 1980s by some 60 million people. It was estimated that one out of five Latin Americans lived in extreme poverty. The globalization of economies that took place in the 1990s does not seem to have brought a rapid solution to the problem since much of the growth observed takes place without substantial creation of employment. There is a general consensus that education and training can do a great deal to break the cycle of marginalization, exclusion, and poverty present in developing nations. Yet many education systems, far from contributing to reducing inequalities and facilitating social integration, continue to exclude large numbers of children and to generate through their systems of selection a deep-seated social differentiation and long-lasting exclusion. This paper about educational strategies for disadvantaged groups discusses the following: why is there a rising interest in poverty alleviation?; education and poverty alleviation; who are the disadvantaged?; the variety of programmes for disadvantaged groups: which one to support first?; motivating children and youth: to vocationalize or not?; the key to successful management: partnership and decentralization; and the challenge of going to scale. (Contains 12 references.) (BT)

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Education strategies for disadvantaged groups:

Some basic issues

Françoise Caillods

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Education strategies for disadvantaged groups: some basic issues

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Education strategies for disadvantaged groups: some basic issues

Françoise Caillods

Why is there a rising interest in poverty alleviation?

According to many indicators, poverty has decreased over the last 30 years. Obviously, it all depends on the definition of poverty and on the way poverty lines are being defined but, since 1960, the occurrence of major famines has all but disappeared, life expectancy has substantially increased, infant mortality has declined, so has the adult illiteracy rate (UNDP, 1996). According to some experts, more people have escaped from poverty in the last 50 years than in the last 500 years. Why then should there be such a concern for poverty alleviation?

The economic crises of the 1980s resulted in a substantial decline in per capita income in numerous African and Latin American countries. These were followed by the adoption of structural adjustment programmes, which emphasized macro-economic equilibrium. They included the privatization of state enterprises and the opening of markets to world trade, all of which have led to an increase in the number of people unemployed or working under extremely precarious conditions. In Latin America, the number of poor increased in the 1980s by some 60 million people. In the early 1990s, the Cepal estimated that one out of five Latin Americans lived in extreme poverty.

The return to growth observed in the 1990s does not seem to have brought a rapid solution to the problem as much of the growth observed takes place without substantial creation of employment. Moreover, the globalization of economies which has taken place at an accelerating pace during the 1990s,

while potentially creating opportunities for growth in various parts of the world, seems also to be passing by many people. Hallak (1998) distinguishes between those who globalize, a small minority with access to knowledge, information and capital, those who are globalized and those who are left out. The latter have little "or no access to information, and knowledge, no absorptive capacities as consumers, and no relevance to production". Within the global system, it seems that more and more people could become permanently superfluous or irrelevant. Growth alone is not enough in the fight against poverty. It is also necessary to act upon income distribution and to invest heavily in human development, of which education is a major component.

Education and poverty alleviation

There is a general consensus that education and training can do a great deal to break the vicious circle of marginalization, exclusion and poverty. Better educated people are more productive, they use whatever capital or land they have in a more efficient way, and they are more likely to innovate and devise new forms of production. Educated women tend to have fewer children, whom they are able to feed and of whom they take better care. They are also more likely to encourage them to go to school, to take an interest in what takes place in school and to transmit some knowledge and practices which will, in turn, contribute to children learning better in school.

Yet many education systems, far from contributing to reducing inequalities and facilitating social integration, continue to exclude large numbers of children and to generate through their systems of selection a deep-seated social differentiation and long-lasting exclusion. Those who have access to high quality education at higher levels can hope to have a job and access to various social services and to the consumer society, which is not the case for others. In spite of considerable efforts as a result of the enactment of the Education for All Declaration in Jomtien, net enrolment ratios are still below 60-70 per cent in many countries of Africa and Southern Asia. Enrolments have even declined in a number of African countries such as Cameroon, Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania, etc. Of those who entered primary education, a

good proportion, up to 50 per cent in some countries, drop out before having completed five years of primary education; that is, before they can be considered as functionally literate.

The truth is that most education systems fail to integrate, or to retain in schools, children who work (in rural as well as in urban areas), children of certain ethnic groups or castes – particularly girls, the poorest of the poor – and, generally speaking, pupils from impoverished rural and urban areas. Many developing countries do not manage to retain those children who work or children of specific disadvantaged groups beyond one to three years of primary education. Many industrialized countries, including Eastern European nations, who used to have high enrolment ratios, do not succeed in interesting many youngsters from disadvantaged groups and in keeping them in school much beyond compulsory schooling. Meanwhile, the sustainability of development projects in rural areas, the creation and expansion of micro enterprises, all activities likely to improve the livelihood of the poorest segments of society, require that the agents be at least functionally literate and numerate. At the same time, to get a job in the modern sector of the economy it is increasingly necessary to have finished not only primary education but secondary schooling as well.

The reasons for such failures are various and many are financial. Due to the shrinking financial capacity of governments to cover all the expenses, parents and communities have been asked to share the costs. The cost of schooling, which includes the purchase of textbooks, uniforms, contributions to the school or to the parent-teacher association, has become too expensive for some families. This explains, for example, why the number of pupils enrolled decreased in countries which had achieved fairly high enrolment ratios (Kenya, Tanzania). Other reasons have to do with the organization of school supply and school regulations. In rural areas, the distance to be covered may discourage parents from sending their daughters to school; school calendars and timetables conflict with the obligations of children who have to work, raise an income and/or help their families: children then do not attend

regularly. They have difficulty in following and subsequently repeat; sooner or later they drop out. Pregnant girls and 'difficult' or disruptive pupils are simply excluded from many schools. Other reasons have to do with the quality of education, which remains poor in many (public) schools in developing countries, where disadvantaged children are enrolled. Classes are overcrowded (with sometimes up to one hundred children in any one class); the learning time is reduced due to the extensive use of double shift (in urban areas) or to the absenteeism of teachers. The curriculum content, the teaching methods and even the language of instruction are often not relevant to the pupils' needs. In most cases, teachers are unable to analyze, let alone attend to the specific learning requirements of children living in a difficult environment. The size of the groups prevents any individualized attention. Even where this is not the case, teachers have not been taught how to teach differently to different groups of pupils, and how to stimulate their interest. Many of them adopt a fatalistic attitude towards school failure, attributing it to the fact that children are poor. Rather than compensating for the lack of support for children at home, many of them probably presume, on the basis of the low socio-economic and cultural status of the parents, that the children will automatically have difficulties, thus reinforcing the possibility that a child might repeat or drop out.

Who are the disadvantaged?

Disadvantaged groups are composed of those who, because of their economic situation, gender, ethnic or linguistic origin, religion, or political status (refugees) have less chance of being integrated socially and economically. They invariably have no access to land or other forms of income-generating activities, and are generally deprived of basic social services such as health, proper housing and education.

In education, the disadvantaged are all those who either have no access to education or those who, after a few years of schooling, drop out without having acquired the minimum level of skills needed to manage adult life in the specific local and national context. Most of them are likely to be disadvantaged in

several of the other above-mentioned criteria. For example, girls in remote rural areas, children from ethnic and cultural minorities, children living in the urban slums who work are most likely to be amongst the educationally disadvantaged or excluded. The profiles of the disadvantaged actually vary from country to country.

The definition of who is disadvantaged is therefore relative and depends on the specific national context. It depends, in particular, on the level of education attained by the majority and on the definition of who is functionally literate in a particular economic and social environment. In many African countries, the disadvantaged are all those who do not have access to at least four or five years of primary education. In countries having developed mass secondary education, and where obtaining a job and finding one's way in a fairly complex, highly literate or computerized society requires a higher educational level, the disadvantaged are likely to be those who did not finish secondary education and left the system without a certified qualification.

Many of the disadvantaged are found in rural areas, where, in most developing countries, the greatest poverty still exists, but they are also increasingly found in urban areas. Indeed, poverty may not be as great in cities as in some rural areas and in education, in particular, indicators of coverage and achievement tend to be higher in cities than in rural areas. But the increase in the number of poor, the erosion of the family and the dilution of the sense of community, solidarity and kinship works to the detriment of social ties and support and, as a result, many more children are left alone in cities and are at risk not only of dropping out, but of becoming delinquents or permanently marginalized.

The variety of programmes for disadvantaged groups: which one to support first?

Many programmes have been developed around the world to provide for the learning needs of different categories of disadvantaged groups. They vary in their objectives, in their size, and in their teaching and learning strategy to

tally with the characteristics and needs of the group of children, youth or adults they serve. They are organized by a variety of government and non-governmental organizations at central and local level and represent an incredible diversity of approaches and interventions. They differ in their costs and in their effectiveness as well. Various typologies of programmes can be elaborated, separating, for example, school-based compensatory programmes from the alternative strategies which have been developed outside the school; those programmes which aim at developing basic competency such as literacy and numeracy – eventually trying to bring the child back into the mainstream education system – from those programmes which focus on the economic and social insertion of youngsters, or from other programmes which aim at fostering rural development or citizenship.

Very little is known about each of these programmes. Some are well known and have inspired other programmes around the world (such as the *Escuela Nueva* in Colombia, the *BRAC* programmes for basic education in Bangladesh, or the vocational training programme in Chile: *Chile Joven*), others are not. Some already operate on a large scale, such as the three mentioned above, or as part of government compensatory programmes (such as the 900 schools in Chile or the *Plan Social Educativo* in Argentina, which covers a third of the country's schools), others are very micro. Systematic information on innovative programmes, specifying their objectives, their target group, their overall approach, their teaching strategies, their mode of operation, their cost and financing and providing insights on what works best, as well as what needs to be improved, would be useful for policy-makers and practitioners in various countries.

An issue which is very relevant for government and aid agencies is which programme to support as a priority? Programmes which attend to the needs of children who are still in school but are in great danger of dropping out before the end of basic education? Those programmes which aim at educating those who have never been to school or have dropped out too early for a variety of reasons? Programmes which support those who work and live in the street? Or programmes for youngsters beyond primary-school age who

have a low educational level, are unemployed or are engaged in extremely precarious – sometimes illegal and high-risk – activities?

The distinction, which is often made between preventive, protective and rehabilitative or curative interventions when dealing with street children, can apply to all educational programmes. Preventive programmes, those which try to address the learning needs of disadvantaged children before their problems become too serious, before exclusion takes place, are probably more cost-effective in the long run than curative interventions, when children are already living in the street, when youngsters have been unemployed for a long time and have developed behaviour which prevents easy integration. Amongst the most effective preventive programmes to be considered are early childhood education programmes, compensatory programmes and remedial courses in primary education, and all alternative educational programmes developed by communities to attend to young children who could never attend schools or dropped out very early.

As far as vocational programmes are concerned, those which respond to some sort of demand from the labour market, or assist youngsters already engaged in productive activities, are probably more cost-effective than programmes aimed at training the unemployed.

Humanitarian and equity considerations as well as political ones – trying to reduce crime and insecurity – make it necessary to organize and support other types of programmes as well.

Motivating children and youth: to vocationalize or not?

Often, one of the main problems of traditional school programmes is that parents, the children and youngsters feel that the education provided is not relevant to their needs, nor is it embedded in their reality. At the same time, the education provided has to help children and youngsters to improve their health and nutrition practices, participate fully in the life of their community as well as survive in a competitive world, work in a more productive way and

raise an income. There is general agreement that amongst the most relevant skills for children and future adults, whether living in a rural or in an urban area, is to know how to read, write and calculate. These are generic skills, which are indispensable for the child or youngster in order to gather further knowledge and skills. Most programmes for young children emphasize the teaching of these basic skills, using local and relevant examples in their teaching as well as trying to diversify teaching and learning methods through singing, acting, etc. A number of programmes for street children in India, for example, do provide impoverished children with some kind of vocational training as well. As children have to work to provide for themselves and their families and as no immediate change in the situation is foreseeable, certain specific skills are taught to children, which encourage them to improve income-generating activities, such as street vending, or others they are already engaged in. At the same time, help is also given to them to obtain loans and defend their rights. While orienting teaching towards children's actual activities does contribute to stimulating and sustaining their interest, it also supplies them with something useful for their immediate and future lives. However, spending much of the extremely limited time that working children have at their disposal to learn by engaging them in practical activities seems a waste. A better use of their time would be to teach them literacy and numeracy, in a contextualized way, using relevant examples, preparing them to follow more specific vocational programmes later on.

The situation is slightly different for 12 to 15 year-old youngsters: many of them are already working in an activity which is likely to be the one they will be engaged in for some time: whatever can be done to help them make a better living and/or contribute to the community's development is useful and necessary. There is also a very strong demand from parents and communities who contribute to the creation of such programmes as the *Centres d'éducation pour le développement* – CED – in Mali, the *Centres d'éducation de base non formelle* – CEBNF – in Burkina Faso or the *Centres Nafa* in Guinea. However, when monitors and teachers in charge of teaching the basic education component are already badly paid (as they are in the CED or CEBNF), it

seems barely justified to invest in the purchase of equipment, the more so if the money available is not enough to buy much equipment or materials. Another element to be brought into the debate is whether or not there is substantial need for the skills taught in the community. Assuming that the centres succeed in buying a few sewing machines and train their pupils in how to sew, what guarantee is there that there is a market for the products of the trainees and future adults? Many programmes for unemployed youth have very low placement rates for the trainees, because the vocational training is not of sufficient quality and because not enough attention has been paid to the labour market demand for the skills produced.

One solution to the dilemma is to place the education and training in the framework of specific rural development programmes. The work initiated by the Club du Sahel, within the framework of the Padlos Project in Sahelian West Africa, demonstrates that there is much potential for the design and implementation of diverse development programmes in rural areas, initiated by grass-roots' actors with the support of NGOs and aid agencies (Easton, 1998). Rural communities engaged in such a process successfully manage to organize themselves and create various networks of co-operation. To sustain such development and reinforce the capacity of communities to manage them, managers and animators as well as a number of other people need to be trained in specific skills. *First*, training requirements should be defined at the local level by the members of the community. *Secondly*, the number of people trained should be tailored to the development of the project: training too many people at once, before the project has taken root and started to bring about the dynamics involved in the creation of employment, may not be a condition of success. Such a programme should therefore remain limited in scale.

Another solution consists in building on existing training capacities in the community, entering into partnership agreements with local artisans and enterprises for the vocational training component and promoting a system of education and training in alternance. This is what the Malian CED and Burkina Faso CEBNF are trying to implement. In following an accelerated three-year

basic education programme, trainees will receive, during the fourth year, short training in the workshop of a local artisan, learning carpentry, masonry, tailoring or some other trade. The trade or the products to be developed will be chosen by the members of the community, taking into consideration what existing capacities exist locally. Of course, the training received will be more of a prevocational orientation than real training, but it may help youngsters to develop an income-generating activity, or encourage them to take on, at a later date, a more specialized form of training or to become an apprentice with one of the artisans concerned. One of the conditions for the success of such a programme is that the selected artisans receive additional training.

More and more programmes seem to be built on the basis of alternance. This is the case, in particular, with the various programmes which are organized with the financial support of the IDB to train little-educated youngsters in several of the Latin American countries (*Chile Joven*, *Projoven* in Argentina, Peru, Uruguay). The selected youngsters receive theoretical training (some 150 to 250 hours) in a centre, during which the various skills for a semi-qualified worker are taught, then they enter an enterprise to receive their practical training for the same period of time. The centres are selected by tendering and their selection depends on their being able to offer industrial attachment (in agriculture, service or industry). The advantages are numerous in terms of costs, as well as in terms of socialization: learners are integrated into a normal working environment, which may, in some cases, turn into real employment. The disadvantage may be that this sort of opportunity can only be offered to youngsters who have not fallen into delinquency and can adapt to a normal working environment. Evaluation of such programmes showed that it is the best-educated youngsters who get selected by training centres and by the enterprises. Since training centres receive, as an incentive, an additional payment if their trainees remain in the enterprise following their period of attachment, it is another reason why they may reject the most disadvantaged youth. Interestingly, another finding in the evaluation of such programmes was the need to reinforce the general knowledge and skills of youngsters following vocational training programmes.

Another example of an alternance programme for disadvantaged groups is that which the National Federation of Artisans of Mali has been setting up over the last 15 years in order to offer an efficient and coherent system of vocational training through apprenticeship. This system, which is operating in partnership with a number of national and international NGOs, provides continuous education and training to artisans as well as general and theoretical training to youngsters who work as apprentices to the head of a micro-enterprise.

All in all, these examples show that successful education and training programmes for disadvantaged youth cannot be entirely general, i.e. focusing on literacy only, or entirely vocational. There is a need for a continuum of programmes, which goes from essentially general education programmes – which are to be contextualized in their content and approach so that they are relevant – to vocational training programmes, which quite often need to contain elements of remedial courses in general basic skills.

The key to successful management: partnership and decentralization

The implementation of programmes in favour of disadvantaged groups requires the co-operation of different actors, from the state and from the civil society, working at the central, the regional and the local level, in the education sphere and in other economic and social sectors. To start with, individuals are different and have different learning needs; these can only be satisfied through the contribution of multiple agencies. Associating families and communities in the planning and organization of the programmes as well as in the teaching process can go a long way towards motivating children to participate and to learn. Also, education alone cannot alleviate poverty, and educational programmes have little chance of succeeding if actions are not taken outside the educational field to reduce poverty. Income redistribution measures, land reform, housing schemes, legal measures condemning child exploitation, and health and nutrition programmes are all measures which can contribute to reducing poverty and to making children and youth more educable. Creating

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work opportunities, allowing youngsters to apply what they have learned, is also essential and this requires co-operating with economic agents. Experience shows that the impact of alternative education projects tends to be heightened when they are part of a collective approach involving several agents concerned with fighting against poverty and when their actions are co-ordinated. More and more programmes are indeed conceived which capitalize on the strengths of different partners. For partnership to be successful the limits of the responsibility of each partner should be clearly defined. Partners should also be prepared to show each other a fair amount of respect. The sustainability of partnership between NGOs and the state (or another public authority) largely depends on the strength and efficiency of both.

NGOs, religious bodies, and local associations master best the 'technology' of alternative strategies for disadvantaged groups. Apart from being more flexible and creative in the choice of the pedagogy, some adopting empowering training methodologies which emphasize learner responsibility and participation, they seem to have developed a real know-how in building relations upstream with disadvantaged groups (the mobilization process). Their contact often starts through non-educational activities such as sport, leisure, protection of rights, agriculture or health-related activities. Downstream, many emphasize the need to accompany the child/youngster after he/she has finished his/her education or training programme and facilitate his/her placement in a micro-enterprise, the obtaining of a credit to start up an activity, or the support of a local development programme. In this regard, they co-operate with local enterprises and federations of enterprises, local artisans, local communities and local authorities; they also co-operate with the representatives of various ministries. Finally, to finance their programme they rely on contacts with public authorities at the central and local level, as well as with agencies and international NGOs.

In view of the incapacity of the state to provide education for all, many rural communities in Africa and elsewhere have created their own primary or, in other cases, secondary schools where local children are enrolled. The quality of such schools could sometimes be improved, but the contents are

adapted to the local milieu. They teach in local languages before introducing a foreign language, they include elements of local history and culture in the teaching of literacy, they embody practical training along with more theoretical education. Within the framework of a strategy aimed at promoting local capacity development and local assumption of development responsibility, some propose encouraging further local communities to develop their own system of schooling and training: "it is a matter of giving voice to local actors, helping them to express and analyze their own needs, to find innovative solutions to their own problems and to define the role which the various training services and aid organizations should play in support of their own initiative." (Easton, 1998).

More recently, municipalities and decentralized authorities have started to finance and/or organize several programmes for disadvantaged groups. Within the framework of the increased decentralization of educational management, they will become increasingly significant actors at the local level. Such a movement is yet to be co-ordinated with the de facto movement of decentralization, which has happened to communities, as mentioned above.

Many other actors contribute by providing vocational training schools, vocational training funds, and universities. The latter have become significant partners in some countries by organizing programmes themselves, by contributing to a reflection on a new and more suitably adapted pedagogy, by preparing teaching materials or by monitoring and evaluating programmes implemented by others.

As a result of the multiplication of actors and initiatives by communities and NGOs, the issue is *what should be the role of the state and that of decentralized public authorities?* The relations with NGOs are complex as there is often a history of distrust between NGOs and government representatives. The former are afraid that the government will attempt to regulate their activity and intervene too much in their actions, without necessarily respecting its own particular commitments. Government, on the

other hand, is jealous of the NGOs' capacity for attracting foreign aid and would like to be able to control them. One element to be taken into consideration is of course the degree of legitimacy of government. Another is the financial capacity of the state. After all, many community programmes have developed because of the incapacity of the state to create schools. Many decentralization programmes have been initiated for the same reason.

Whatever the case may be, however, the role of the state should be to define the overall policy and fix the goals to be attained. It should also act in order to prevent excessive inequalities developing between regions, communities, and urban and rural areas. This means contributing, at least partly, to the *financing* of the activities according to the case, to the payment of (some) teachers and monitors, to the elaboration of teaching materials, and to the training of the animators. The cost of community programmes and non-formal programmes is – after all – much lower than that of formal education and the contribution of the state could help in reducing inequalities. Another form of intervention and monitoring is *certification* through the granting of an equivalence with some part or parts of the formal education system.

Not all NGOs, however, are doing marvellous work. They are not all promoting a sectoral nor a participatory approach. Their management process is not always transparent and there are cases where NGOs have turned themselves into real bureaucracies. Government should then play a significant role in providing information about who is doing what, in order to facilitate the transparency and co-ordination mechanism. Other NGOs have management problems. The state could also put in place a mechanism for strengthening NGOs.

It is interesting to note that even in countries which suffer from dire financial restrictions, the relationship between government and communities and government and NGOs is increasingly taking the form of a *contractual arrangement*, whereby the responsibility of each partner is clearly defined. This implies that the government accepts that a diversity of approaches (formal

and non-formal) is necessary to satisfy the learning needs of all; it accepts taking non-formal education into consideration when planning its educational programmes. Finally, it means that the state recognizes that planning and co-ordination of educational activities for disadvantaged groups best takes place at the regional or local level so as to promote a policy of proximity and dialogue with the local stakeholders.

In all cases, government should be aware of the most interesting and innovative programmes conducted by communities and NGOs, either so that it can eventually finance them and/or in order to learn from their experience. Some of the most successful compensatory programmes organized by ministries of education have been inspired and engineered by former NGO members.

The challenge of going to scale

Most governments and agencies are concerned with enrolling 100 per cent of the children in school. This cannot be easily achieved by the multiplication of micro projects; hence the concern of policy-makers with trying to go to scale. International organizations and aid agencies have similar concerns: to identify a successful model and reproduce it in a different country, in a different context. There is no standardized method for going to scale, nor is it easy to transfer an approach which has worked in one context to another. This remains a challenge.

Some general guidelines may be drawn from the above, as follows:

➤➤ Some programmes are more generalizable than others: basic education programmes, in particular, aiming at educating children who are not in too serious difficulty, are more likely to be scaled up than others. They are more standardized in their general approach, even if a great deal of flexibility has to be left to those concerned with their implementation at the grass-root level. Programmes, on the other hand, dealing with

street children necessitate a variety of approaches to meet a variety of objectives: they are not easily reproduced. Similarly, programmes conceived as part and parcel of a local development project are so entangled in a local context that they are not transferable. The same can be said of programmes organized with artisans of the informal sector: experience shows that negotiation with local players takes a long time due to the need to convince artisans of the interest of collaborating with public authorities. What can be analyzed and transferred are the methods of analysis of local needs. The key to the success of the operation, however, lies more in the process by which artisans are convinced of the need to co-operate and given the responsibility of running the programme, and this experience is very specific to each context.

➤➤ When generalizing, the approach followed has to be analyzed and described step by step in a sort of handbook to be used for training managers in other areas. This generally entails *simplifying* the method followed to make it more easily transferable. There are several dangers inherent in this process: one is *oversimplifying* the method used, trying to find short cuts, when this is not actually possible. The other is, on the contrary, to *ritualize* and bureaucratize a process, robbing it of its essential vitality, losing the spirit and spontaneity of the original scheme. It is not easy to find one's way between these two extremes. Many projects concerned with educating disadvantaged children and girls in the rural area have adopted the same approach as was originally developed by BRAC in Bangladesh and later elaborated in such projects as Lok Jumbish. One of the main features of this approach is to create in each village an education committee, which has assumed the responsibility for planning education, for identifying out-of-school children, and for encouraging them to enrol. Such a process of empowerment involves mobilization and training: it may, in some instances, take several months of active environment-building before the members of the committee are identified and start operating. In other

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projects, it may take only a few days or weeks. It would not be surprising to find that in the second case the members of the committee chosen are the representatives of the traditional leadership structure, unlikely to challenge the present cultural pattern of behaviour nor shift the power relationship, and that the creation of a committee will have no significant long-lasting impact. *There are no quick fixes nor short cuts when emphasizing building and empowerment of local communities.*

➤➤ Scaling up a project involves *training the management staff* of NGOs, reinforcing their institutional capacity as well as the teams and trainers working at the local level. It involves also setting up an information base to monitor the process and implementing methods of continuous participatory evaluation.

➤➤ The most successful programmes for disadvantaged groups are those that emphasize communities' and learners' responsibility through decentralized and participatory approaches. When generalizing and going to scale, attention has to be paid to leaving *operational autonomy and flexibility* to those operating at the grass-root level, while maintaining an overall coherence of the system and putting into place mechanisms for monitoring and ensuring accountability. *New methods of management* have to be devised. In this respect, some innovative programmes have emerged which combine state financing with full autonomy of a local team and operators to devise the most appropriate implementation strategies within a general framework (*management by objectives*), and entering into partnership with a variety of actors at the local level through *performance-contracting* (ensuring accountability).

➤➤ Another trend which is noticeable is that of selecting partners through tendering and selection of the 'most innovative' projects and procedures. While this procedure may appear attractive because of its potentiality of bringing new actors into the field and encouraging

transparency and accountability, it may have some perverse effects. One of them is that of discouraging small NGOs working with a difficult public to enter into the competition, first because they do not have the management capacity to answer tendering procedures, second, because they may be afraid of not being competitive and not able to demonstrate sufficiently *efficiency indicators*. This raises another delicate issue, which is that of the *selection of* performance indicators in the analysis of effective programmes.

A final issue is that of the *institutionalization of alternative educational programmes*. What is going to happen to such projects in the long run? Will they remain alternative? Or will they be institutionalized, nevertheless running the risk of being considered as a second-class system, if anything, because they attend to disadvantaged groups? A better articulation between formal and non-formal education, allowing pupils to transfer from one system to another, allowing the brightest children to continue schooling at a higher level, may be a solution to this dilemma. More attention has thus to be paid to certification mechanisms. It may only be a partial solution, however, if very few youngsters take advantage of this opportunity to continue their studies.

Ultimately, the objective is that as development takes place a greater number of children will be able to enrol in mainstream primary education. It is also hoped that lessons will be derived from such projects, which will be applied to the mainstream education system, both in terms of their participatory and decentralized management as well as in terms of the innovative pedagogy used. This, however, requires a substantial transformation of present education systems. The best way would be to make formal education more informal (and informal education more formal) but this is a challenge in itself.

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